

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5969

As Passed Senate, December 14, 2011

Title: An act relating to procedures allowing certain military spouses to seek employment in state-licensed professional occupations after relocating to Washington.

Brief Description: Concerning the establishment of procedures for the professional licensing of military spouses after relocation to Washington.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Kilmer, Becker, Carrell, Hobbs, Shin, Swecker, Conway, Eide, Rolfes, Harper, Kastama, Fain, Hatfield, King, Haugen, McAuliffe, Hargrove, Nelson, Tom, Pridemore, Keiser, Sheldon, Prentice, Hewitt, Zarelli, Baumgartner, Padden, Chase, Kline, Frockt, Brown, Kohl-Welles, Ranker, Murray, Regala and Parlette).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections: 12/13/11 [DPS].

Second Special Session: Passed Senate: 12/14/11, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5969 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Pridemore, Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Chase and Nelson.

Staff: Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

Background: The Department of Licensing (Department) regulates certain businesses and professions. Each regulated business and profession has a separate set of laws and separate licensing requirements. Some businesses and professions are under the authority of the Director of the Department while others are under a board or commission charged with regulating the particular business or profession.

Licensing requirements for professions vary considerably. Some licenses require college-level coursework and experience. Other professions might require an examination, a surety

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bond, minimum safety standards, or other requirements, but do not require that the applicants have specific training or experience to be licensed.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill: Each professional authority responsible for licensing, certifying, registering or issuing a permit to perform a professional service in this state is required to establish procedures to expedite the issuance of a license, certificate, or permit to a person who:

- is certified or licensed in another state to perform professional services in that state;
- whose spouse is the subject of a military transfer to Washington; and
- who left employment in the other state to accompany the person's spouse to Washington.

The procedure must include a process for issuing the person a license; certificate; registration; or permit, if, in the opinion of the regulating authority, the requirements for licensure; certification; registration; or obtaining a permit in the other state are substantially equivalent to that required in Washington.

Each professional authority is required to develop a method to authorize a person who meets the established criteria to perform services by issuing the person a temporary license, certificate, registration, or permit for a limited period of time. The temporary license allows the person to perform services regulated by the authority while completing any specific requirements that may be required in this state that were not required in the other state, unless the authority finds that the requirements of the other state are substantially unequal to the standards in this state.

Authority is defined as any board, commission, or other authority for issuance of a license, certificate, registration, or permit.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Recommended Substitute: PRO: Currently, 11 states have passed legislation that expedites licensing for military spouses. Two-thirds of military personnel report that the ability of their spouse to continue with their chosen profession factors into their decision to continue in service. One-third of military spouses are in a licensed profession. This bill is a high priority for the Department of Defense. This is another way we can assist military families. Washington has reciprocity with all 50 states when it comes to teachers. With current postings lasting between two and four years, it is important that transfer and employment requirements work as seamlessly as possible. Washington has previously enacted legislation to assist military children with the transferring of their education credits, it's important that we support all members in the military family. The current challenges surround finding employment with the economy the way it is. Licensing and credentialing should not add additional barriers.

OTHER: This bill needs additional review. There needs to be additional assurances that the requirements for licensure in Washington will not be changed for military spouses. There needs to be additional explanation for what "within available resources" means. Will these changes create additional expenses?

Persons Testifying: PRO: Mark San Souci, Department of Defense State Liaison Office; Ted Wicorek, Veterans Legislative Coalition; David Breanna, Professional Educators Standards Board; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; Gary Brackett, Tacoma - Pierce County Chamber; Bob Rudolph, Veteran & Military Families for Progress, Veterans Legislative Coalition; Melissa Johnson, Washington State Nurses Association.

OTHER: Leslie Emerick, Association of Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurses.